

Berlin Senate seeks to cover its tracks after murder of refugee child

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Four weeks ago, four-year-old Mohamed Januzi, a refugee child from Bosnia, was enticed away from the crowd in front of the refugee reception center known as LaGeSo in Berlin's Moabit neighborhood. He was subsequently sexually abused and murdered. Last Thursday his body was discovered in the car of the perpetrator, who has since confessed to the crime.

Under the headline "Don't politically exploit the crime committed against Mohamed," the Berlin Senate's Department of the Interior and Sport issued a press release last Friday in which Interior Senator Frank Henkel of the Christian Democratic Union (CDU) rejected any responsibility for the death of Mohamed Januzi.

Henkel's administrative department refers to a statement made by Bettina Jarasch, the chairwoman of the Berlin city-state section of the Green Party. The day before Henkel's press release, she declared in an official statement on the murder of Mohamed: "What also worries me is that it was the chaotic conditions at LaGeSo that made the kidnapping so easy for the perpetrator. The Senate bears the overall responsibility for ensuring that such a thing cannot happen again."

This statement only states the obvious: the chaos prevailing at the central reception office greatly facilitated the abduction of the refugee child. About this, there can be no argument. The fact that Mohamed's mother was forced to stand with her three small children in the crowd before dawn and wait for hours was the consequence of official indifference and bloody-mindedness.

This is why Interior Senator Henkel (CDU) bewails: "I'm stunned at how quickly people can try to exploit this crime. After such a horrific event, can't a person show some human respect for at least a few hours, before taking up this cynical little game."

What "human respect" has Mr. Henkel been showing? For months, the refugees crowded in front of his administration's office building have been denied the bare necessities. Heading the list of donation requests compiled by the "Moabit helps" movement are baby bottles, baby care products and diapers. The next section lists blankets, ground mats and baby buggies. Further requests include hygiene articles of all kinds, shoes, socks, warm sweaters, bottled water, food, rain gear and many other indispensable necessities.

Since summer, hundreds of people have been standing for weeks under the open sky—at first in stifling heat and now in the freezing cold—just to get a numbered waiting ticket or, like Mohamed's mother, collect a paltry sum of social aid money.

These are the circumstances which made this crime possible.

"Such appalling crimes can also happen in other contexts," wrote the Senate administration's press release. Certainly! But the kidnapping and murder of Mohamed Januzidid not happen in any general context, it happened in a very specific one.

How would someone respond to a police officer who shrugs off an investigation into a criminal deed with the general observation that crimes can happen "in other contexts, too?"

The notion of "human respect" comes to the senator's mind only when he needs to use it to distract attention from his own responsibility for the conditions at LaGeSo and their consequences! The person playing a "cynical game" here is the senator!

The Greens, who are in the Berlin Senate opposition, merely call for more efficient management of the refugees' calamitous situation. In an interview with the *Berliner Zeitung* October 2, Bettina Jarasch declared, "It is a fact of law that if people have exhausted their

legal claims to asylum and are 'enforceably obliged to leave the country,' then they must go. The problem is that Henkel's immigration office and police just can't get round to deporting these people."



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